

# Obtaining a Voluntary Home Earthquake Retrofit Permit

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A DDES Customer Information Bulletin



King County Department of Development and Environmental Services  
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<http://www.metrokc.gov/ddes/>

## Frequently Asked Questions

King County DDES has created customer information bulletins to inform the general public about the effect of codes and regulations on their projects. These bulletins are not intended to be complete statements of all laws and rules and should not be used as substitutes for them. If conflicts and questions arise, current codes and regulations are the final authority. Because the codes and regulations may be revised or amended at any time, consult King County staff to be sure you understand all requirements before beginning work. It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that the project meets all requirements of applicable codes and regulations.

The Voluntary Home Earthquake Retrofit Permit Program is a convenient system of booklets, forms and drawings which address the seismic retrofitting of existing homes with weak pony walls and unbolted sill plates. The purpose of this retrofit is to help safeguard against major structural failures due to earthquakes. This bulletin serves as a guideline to help you understand the process for obtaining this permit, which can often be issued over-the-counter during your intake appointment provided your home meets the prescribed structural criteria.

In general, the homes must be of wood-frame construction with a light weight roof, not irregularly shaped, with a reinforced concrete foundation, up to two stories in height and on a relatively level lot. For more detailed information, consult the three booklets produced as part of the Home Earthquake Retrofit Series. These booklets: Booklet 1, *Overview*; Booklet 2, *Guide to Completing the Home Assessment Checklist* and Booklet 3, *Guide to Completing a Home Earthquake Retrofit Plan for Wood Framed Residential Buildings* along with the *Standard Home Retrofit Plan Set*, drawings *S1* and *S2*, are available from the DDES Permit Center for a nominal fee.

Homes that do not meet the prescribed structural criteria of this program or that are located in a flood plain are still candidates for seismic retrofitting. However, an architect, surveyor or structural engineer will need to develop specific plans for your home, and DDES will need more time to review those more unique situations.

Your project will be checked for compliance with the following codes; Uniform Building Code, Washington State Energy Code (if basement areas are heated) and other ordinances and policies adopted by King County and/or Washington State.

Please note that this bulletin is updated periodically as requirements change.

## Frequently Asked Questions

To obtain a Voluntary Home Earthquake Retrofit Permit, you must provide the King County Department of Development and Environmental Services (DDES) with the following:

- A. Certification of Applicant Status or Certification of Transfer of Applicant Status
- B. Affidavit for application
- C. Property tax account number
- D. Hazard Assessment Checklist
- E. Standard Home Earthquake Retrofit Plan Set
- F. Valuation for retrofit scope of work
- G. Fees for reviews completed before permit approval
- H. Contractor's Registration Number/Owner Affidavit

**Review of your application will not begin until you have submitted all materials and fees specified for a complete application.**

### A. Certification of Applicant Status form or Certification of Transfer of Applicant Status form

The purpose of the Certification of Applicant Status form is to document the person or company making an application to modify a property. The property owner uses this form to certify the identity of the applicant. The applicant is authorized to receive plans and correspondence from DDES. If the applicant is not the property owner, the Certification and Transfer of Applicant Status form is used to transfer applicant status to an agent when authorized by the legal property owner.

### B. Affidavit for application form

The Affidavit of Application establishes the scope of work, the property owner, and/or the agent, as well as Sensitive Areas compliance. Please be sure to bring the owner's name, address, and telephone number and the applicant's name, address, and telephone number (if different from that of the owner). This information is required if it is necessary to contact someone to answer additional questions that arise during the application process. The address is used also to notify the owner by mail that the permit is ready for pickup.

### C. Property tax account number

This is an identifying number assigned by the Assessor's Office. DDES uses this number to verify that property taxes are paid. **Permits will not be issued unless taxes are current.**

### D. Hazard Assessment Checklist

The Hazard Assessment Checklist, found in the Home Earthquake Retrofit Series Booklets 2 and 3, is used to determine if your house qualifies to use the standard reference details and if earthquake retrofit work is required. Booklet 2 contains a guide to completing the checklist. This checklist is also available separately at the DDES Permit Center. The checklist must be completed and submitted to DDES, along with the plan sets.

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### E. Standard Home Earthquake Retrofit Plan Set

After completing the Hazard Assessment Checklist and determining that your house qualifies for this program, you must complete sheets S1 and S2 of the Plan Set. Booklet 3, of the Home Earthquake Retrofit Series, contains a guide to completing the Plan Set according to the minimum requirements. Sheet S1 provides a grid to create a scaled outline (scale: 1/4" = 1' - 0" preferred, 1/8" = 1' - 0" allowed) of your house foundation. You may view and/or print a sample of the Standard Home Retrofit Plan Set drawings S1 and S2 (44" x 36") at [http://www.metrokc.gov/ddes/acrobat/cib/50\\_app\\_a.pdf](http://www.metrokc.gov/ddes/acrobat/cib/50_app_a.pdf) (1.7MB).

Please designate the use of each room or space (e.g. storage, garage, etc.) and indicate the square footage of any conditioned space. Once you have completed this outline, you then select retrofit solutions from sheet S2. The solutions vary depending on the specific construction of your home. Once these two sheets are complete, two sets are required: one for the field and one for our records. These sets are required to be legible reproductions (no pencil drawings) on substantial paper.

If your proposed retrofit deviates from the standard conditions, DDES may require additional drawing, details, sections or stamped engineered calculations and/or details for any building site. If you are planning to retrofit a log house, pole building, or metal, masonry, or concrete structure, calculations and plans stamped by a licensed engineer will likely be required.

### F. Retrofit Scope of Work

The applicant is to provide a dollar value for the cost of materials and labor for the retrofit scope of work.

### G. Fees

All base, plan check, and inspection fees are due upon application. If applicable, additional review time will be charged hourly and due at permit issuance.

### H. Contractor's registration number/owner affidavit

Contractors must be licensed with the state per state law. When choosing a contractor, please refer to *Bulletin 6, Working with Contractors*. An owner can be an owner-contractor when building on his or her own property subject to completing a notarized affidavit. Owner affidavit forms are available upon request.

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### Other bulletins and telephone numbers that may be helpful

Customer Information Bulletins are available on the Department's web site at <http://www.metrokc.gov/ddes>. If no web access is available, you may call the DDES Permit Center at 206-296-6600 to request information by mail.

Bulletin 1	Building and Development Permit Telephone Numbers
Bulletin 3	Demolition Permits
Bulletin 4	Damage Repairs
Bulletin 6	Working with Contractors
Bulletin 9	Obtaining a Residential Building Permit
Bulletin 10	Residential Building on or Near Waterfront
Bulletin 12	The Residential Building Permit Process
Bulletin 21	Sensitive Areas Review

206-296-6600 DDES Information  
206-296-6797 DDES Permit Center Appointment Desk

### Also Available:

Energy Code Compliance Forms  
Residential Correction Sheets  
Prescriptive Design Method for Lateral Design  
King County Rockery Requirements

### Additional Resources:

*Homeowner Classes for Assessing and Retrofitting Your Home: including tool lending library and contractor and volunteer assistance*  
Phinney Neighborhood Association -- 206-382-2159

*Retrofitting Classes for Contractors*  
UW Construction Management -- 206-382-2159

*Home Retrofit Loans*  
Washington Mutual -- 1-800-756-8000  
Bank of America (formerly SeaFirst Bank) -- 206-585-1808



King County complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). If you require an accommodation to attend a meeting (two weeks' notice) or require this information in Braille, audiocassette, or large print, please call 206-296-6693 or TTY 206-296-7217.